Definition of “Internet Flaming” and Prototype Case Database

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Abstract - The number of phenomena called “Internet Flaming” is increasing rapidly. “Internet Flaming” affects us not only in the Internet community, but also in our real lives. Today, the border between TV and the Internet has become blurred and their influential power is in opposition. Therefore, there are many cases in which Internet Flaming occurs by TV broadcast instead of “by the route from the Internet to television.” The aim of this study is to identify the cause of “Internet Flaming” and develop a deterrent strategy. For this study, we strongly feel the necessity for a systematic database about “Internet Flaming.” Therefore, we examine a prototype of a comprehensive database for Internet Flaming. The term, “Internet Flaming” is often used incorrectly. At present, a strict and systematic arrangement has not been made so far. We suppose that to supply the correct information about “Internet Flaming” will have an enlightening influence on general consumers.

Keywords: Internet flaming; Database; Media Analysis; SNS

2 Purpose

For many people, the phenomenon of Internet Flaming is a new form of “entertainment based on the misery of others”, which has previously been provided by television gossip shows or sports journals. As a matter of course, much of the information on “Internet Flaming” is currently not strictly organized. There are many cases where the information is just gossip, incorrect information without accuracy, or simply false. Especially in the television industry, there are a certain number of cases in which they create shows based on misunderstanding of “Internet Flaming”. In this research, we give a clear definition for such ambiguous “Internet Flaming”, and subsequently, we construct and release a comprehensive database site that has exhaustive information based on strict examination. We suppose that there is a great need for the database from the whole media industry. We also aim, to supply the correct information about “Internet Flaming” to enlighten general consumers.

3 Factors and targets of Internet flaming

“Internet Flaming” has various types. Regarding the occurrence factors, it can be classified into five categories; “Careless remarks” such as celebrities’ discriminatory remarks and extreme remarks, “Unscrupulous acts” in which people carry out the actions that seem unscrupulous according to social norms and post those actions on SNSs (Social Networking Sites), “Individual injustice” including the discovery of plagiarism, false words, infidelity, illegal or unlawful acts by celebrities, “Organizational injustice” including the discovery of an irregularity by an administration or public interest corporations, and finally “Media critique” in which the biased coverage of the news, TV shows or newspapers are pointed out.

Each of the five categories has eight sub-categories based on the applied targets: “entertainers”, “politicians”, “general people”, “students”, “schools”, “companies”, “administrations” and “foreign countries.” Most cases can be organized with this classification.
4 Definition of Internet flaming

In the current situation, there is a certain tendency for any trouble or scandal, which becomes a hot topic on the Internet to be labeled as “Internet Flaming”. However, “Internet Flaming” does not just cover the fact that gossip or scandals become hot topics on the Internet. We can define “Internet Flaming” clearly as “a phenomenon in which a certain Internet topic, that has been criticized by an unspecified number of people, gets agitated and spread through SNSs and other media, and the topic affects the real world”.

More specifically, the Internet media, including SNSs, play a role to elicit and ignite problems. SNS users and individuals who belong to other Internet communities diffuse the issues, and ultimately it affects the real world including media such as television and newspapers. The effect in this case is that the target’s social status is critically impacted and may result in losing jobs, having a significant loss of honor and credibility, or being forced to leave school.

5 Deference between Internet flaming and gossip

“Internet Flaming” appears similar to so-called “gossip” and “scandals” that are treated in weekly photo magazines and television talk shows, however they are essentially different from each other. As for editing a database for “Internet Flaming”, it is certain that the covered items are often the same as the topic of celebrity gossip or political scandals. We will explain the fundamental difference between Internet Flaming and gossip or scandals in this section.

The biggest difference between Internet Flaming and gossip is the involved members and their roles. Gossip and scandals, which are dramatized by magazines or television talk shows are made up of two members; “Target” and “Media”. Specifically, media reports and spreads information on the target, who is the focus of gossip or blaming (Figure. 1). Regarding news coverage of gossip and scandals, media such as magazines and TV programs cover a story of the target, create content, and spread it widely through their own media. In short, there is a one-to-one composition of media and the target.

On the other hand, unlike gossip, Internet Flaming includes “operators (Internet users)” in addition to “targets” and “media”. As for gossip, media such as magazines and TV shows have played the whole role of collecting information on the target, creating content and spreading it. With regards to Internet Flaming, media take a passive position, and content is created and disseminated through private activities by a large number of unspecified SNS users (Figure.2).

6 Prototype of Internet Flaming Database

It is said that the earliest phenomenon called Internet Flaming occurred around 1999. Since the beginning of the 2010s, “Internet Flaming” has become a hot topic. Through this research, we collected the major Internet Flaming cases that occurred in the period from 1999 to 2018, and currently 179 cases are published as a prototype database on http://www.net-enjo.com.

At present, we aim to distinguish “Internet Flaming” and others by disclosing the Internet Flaming cases that includes three members previously described in this section. It is still hard to say whether the organizing method and the volume of information are the most appropriate because the system is only a prototype. In addition, as all the collected data is currently limited to Japanese cases, we will also investigate Internet Flaming all over the world in the future. Along with that, we will extend the system to languages other than Japanese.

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Figure 1. Gossip structure.

Figure 2. Internet Flaming structure.
7 References


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